



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts
730 Massachusetts Ave., Arlington, MA 02476
Phone: 781-316-3000

webmaster@town.arlington.ma.us

School Committee Minutes 09-10-2002

The Arlington School Committee
Regular Meeting
Tuesday, September 10, 2002

Present: **David W. McKenna, Chair**
 Suzanne Owayda, Vice Chair
 Paul Schlichtman, Secretary
 Barbara Goodman

Joani LaMachia
 Denis Sullivan
 Martin Thrope

Superintendent: **Kathleen Donovan**
Asst. Superintendent: **Joanne Gurry**
Chief Financial Officer: **David Kale**
Special Education Director: **Marilyn Bisbicos**
Student Advisory Rep: **Nathan Band**

Call to order: 7:45 PM

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Mr. Schlichtman brought to the Committee's attention correspondence received from NSBA urging voters to contact to their representative to oppose to bill H.R.5193. The bill proposes to give a tax break to individuals who send their children to private schools and removes funds from the treasury that should be invested in public schools

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman and seconded by Mr. Sullivan it was unanimously
Voted to approve the regular meeting minutes of May 28, 2002.

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman and seconded by Mr. Sullivan it was unanimously
Voted to approve the Executive session minutes of May 28, 2002.

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman and seconded by Ms. Goodman it was unanimously
Voted to approve regular meeting minutes of May 14, 2002

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman and seconded by Ms. Goodman it was unanimously
Voted to approve the executive session minutes of May 14, 2002

Ms. Owayda introduced Nathan Band, AHS representative on the Student Advisory Council. Ms. Owayda explained that a different representative from the council would sit in on the school committee meetings as a non-voting member but would be able to ask questions of the committee. At the next School Committee meeting the Student Advisory Council is scheduled to meet with the School Committee at 6:15 PM; the advisory council is responsible for setting the agenda and providing any back up materials for the meeting.

FIELD TRIP VOTE

Supt. Donovan asked Pasquale Tassone, Director of Performing Arts, and Cheryl Hemenway, Director of AHS Madrigal Singers to speak on their request for an out of the country field trip to Italy. Mr. Tassone noted that the

Honors Orchestra and the Madrigal Singers were invited to perform a concert tour by the regional government of Calabria. Ms. Hemenway reviewed the itinerary explaining that it is a performance and cultural trip to Southern Italy, scheduled for February 12-23, 2003; the students would miss two school days.

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Ms. LaMachia it was unanimously Voted to approve the Performing Arts Department field trip to Southern Italy on February 12-23, 2003.

Mr. Thrope moved to amend the motion: that the school committee reserve the right to rescind approval if events warrant necessary with the School Committee assuming no financial liability in the event of cancellation. Motion fails 7-0.

Mr. Sullivan & Schlichtman argued against the motion stating that the Superintendent should make value judgments on field trips in case of an emergency.

Both Mr. Thrope and Ms. LaMachia made it a point to note that Mr. Tassone had followed the proper procedure for requesting permission for an out of country/state field trip and hoped other requests would be presented in the same manner.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Supt. Donovan welcomed the committee back and noted that the beginning of school went smoothly. There are 40 new staff members.

Mrs. Donovan noted that the schools will be observing a moment of silence at 12:00 pm on September 11th; the high school will also observe a moment of silence at 8:46 with 3 chimes ringing at 8:47; in addition there will be a dedication at 1:30 in the main lobby of AHS of a mural painted by students. There will also be a candlelight remembrance at the Town Hall at 7:00 PM.

Supt. Donovan also presented a general update to the Committee on:

- .. The accreditation visiting team will be at AHS, November 3-6, 2002
- .. Bob Sprague has placed APS policy & procedure manual on the Town website
- .. The Board of Selectmen will call a Special Town Meeting on November 6th to hear reports on the various department's budget.
- .. Kay will convene a meeting of the Infrastructure Committee, tentatively set for September 19th 6:00PM.
- .. MCAS results are due to be released by September 17th.
- .. Kay will seek waivers for students who have not passed the MCAS.
- .. Two new classes have been added at the high school; an integrated kindergarten and an adaptive class for high school student. She thanked Special Education Director, Marilyn Bisbicos for the creation and implementation of these new programs.

.. Grants

APS has received \$2.74 million dollars in grant money. However, Supt. Donovan noted that the health grant, the gay, straight alliance grant, and the links grant have been cut.

.. Latest enrollment figures

Enrollments are up with 434 kindergarten students and 84 new students system-wide. Ms. Owayda expressed concern that prospective homebuyers are not aware of the change in the entrance age of kindergarten students. The Committee will send local real estate offices the policy on the entrance age.

.. Summer Workshops

Asst. Superintendent Gurry reported that approximately 160 Arlington teachers participated in professional development programs over the summer. Out of 31 workshops sponsored by APS, 24 were funded by grants.

.. Peirce Field

Meetings have taken place over the summer; Phase IV is expected to be submitted to the EPA by September, 2003. Most of the work that is being done is engineering, and designing of the fields and flood plains. Construction of the field is expected to start in the fall of 2004.

.. Dallin Update

The Dallin School will be the subject of the infrastructure committee meeting next week. The committee will be looking at cost, debt money in addition to other factors.

Break

BUDGET UPDATE

CFO David Kale described to the Committee the events that took place between the last meeting in June when the schools reduced the budget by \$920,000.00 and the current situation of cutting an additional \$160,000.00. He explained that by the time the State budget was adopted it became clear that projected State revenues were not meeting expectations which required the Governor to propose significant reductions to the State budget. That included reductions in state aid to local cities and towns even though we anticipated no reductions.

At the budget revenue task force meeting over the summer it was learned that state aid was reduced to the town by \$500,000.00. Mr. Kale continued stating that based on the O'Neil formula the allocation to the school amounts to approximately \$160,000.00. The reductions will be presented to a Special Town meeting on November 6th.

The proposed cuts by the Administration include:

- .. Appoint a full time Acting Director of Guidance for one year. Offset the additional cost by holding a vacant Reach-up Teacher position at the high school.
- .. Reduce two vacant teacher positions in reserve which were part of the adopted budget.
- .. Reduce vacant Primary Education Specialist position.
- .. Have in-house bus drivers cover routes for eligible 6th grade students at Ottoson Middle School
- .. Reduce vacant clerical position in the Library/Media Dept. from full-time to part-time.
- .. Reduce various miscellaneous stipends
- .. Use indirect costs received thorough grants for administrative overhead to offset Business Office expenses.
- .. Fund a portion of the salary of the position of School Volunteer/Grant Writer from grant funds
- .. Reduce vacant .20 elementary physical education teacher position.

Ms. Goodman asked the Supt. to clearly state the impact on students. Mrs. Donovan acknowledged that class sizes have increased; there are many classes kindergarten through 5th in the 20-24 range.

Ms. Owayda recommended that the budget subcommittee work on getting a clearer breakdown on what previously "core" programs (funded from the school budget) are now being funded through grant money.

Mr. Schlichtman pointed out budgeting for the school system is very different than budgeting for the town. He believes that there is more flexibility on the Town side; the school system has 84 new students that must have teachers. It is his belief that the O'Neill formula is for establishing the budget going into Town Meeting not after the budget has been approved and set. Mr. Schlichtman reiterated that we must make the case to Town Meeting that we have a firm choice on what this community values and that we need more discussion before Town Meeting looks at it.

Ms. LaMachia agreed with Paul's recommendation that the School Committee receive the report but not approve reductions at this point.

Mr. Thrope stated that we are being presented with a different number of students than in June, that we must serve them to the best of our ability, advocate within the process for what we need, and stand up for our students.

Mr. Sullivan suggested that more thought go into the formula and possibly invite someone in to discuss the allocation of budget cuts.

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman and seconded by Mr. Sullivan it was unanimously Voted to receive the Superintendent's FY2002-2003 Budget Reduction and Reallocation Listing.

On a motion by Ms. Goodman, seconded by Mr. Schlichtman and amended by Mr. Thrope it was unanimously Voted to invite the Board of Selectmen to a school committee meeting to discuss the implications of the recent cuts and the impact of our schools; in addition, discuss what our community values regarding the kind of school system we want in this Town prior to the Special Town Meeting.

Although Mr. McKenna agreed with many of the ideas presented by committee members he cautioned committee members against pitting school, versus town. He reiterated that the town treasurer, the finance committee, the capital planning committee, and the board of selectmen must look at total value for the town

Mr. Schlichtman stated that we are fulfilling our responsibility as elected officials – we must let the community know the kind of service and the level of service that is being cut at the school.

Budget Subcommittee

Ms. LaMachia reported that the budget subcommittee met over the summer with Mike Gilbert of MASC to discuss roles and responsibilities of the subcommittee relative to the budget process. Based on that meeting a proposed role outline and schedule was drafted. The budget subcommittee will meet before the 1st meeting of the month at 6:30 PM.

On a motion by Ms. Goodman and seconded by Mr. Sullivan it was unanimously Voted to receive the proposed budget schedule for the 2002-2003 school year as outlined.

Mr. Thrope requested that the budget subcommittee consider reviewing the budget proposals line by line.

The subcommittee reviewed a draft proposal of the **Recommend Procedures for Warrant Approvals, Budget Transfer and Reporting** that outlines the process approval for Vendor Warrants. Ms. LaMachia requested that the full committee review the proposal so that it may be approved at the next meeting.

PTBC UPDATE

Ms. Owayda reported that Peirce School is almost finished ;completion date is sometime between Columbus Day and November 1st. Suzanne would like the School Committee to schedule a walk through sometime in October. The School Committee must also approve the placement of tiles created by students in the school.

RFPs have been sent out for basic designs on both Stratton and Thompson Schools and are expected back by September 19th. The goal is to be placed on the DOE list by March 2003. Testing is ongoing at the Brackett relative to the noise levels.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

Policy & Procedures

Ms. Owayda reported that the subcommittee met over the summer and approved the following policies for a 1st reading to the full committee for approval: Policy JRA Student Records, File JEC Open Enrollment Policy. Ms. Owayda would like to vote the policies at the next meeting.

Ms. Owayda stated that the subcommittee has also been working on the field trip policy and creating a kindergarten fee policy.

Specialized Student Services

Ms. Goodman reported that the Specialized Student Services met earlier to discuss the placement of the BIP at the elementary schools. The subcommittee recommended that the advantages of the Stratton were clearly delineated.

The physical plan allows both autonomy for the program and interaction with the students and staff, past staff relationships as well as Mr. Brown. The Stratton School principal is a former special education teacher.

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman and seconded it was unanimously

Voted to accept the recommendation of the Administration and subcommittee and place the Behavioral Intervention Program at the Stratton School.

VOTE ON PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DATE

Supt. Donovan explained that discussion has taken place with the AEA relative to changing the professional development day from March to November. The Superintendent believed it helps the high school get ready for the accreditation visiting team and would also give the Peirce School staff the opportunity to spend the entire day getting their classrooms ready.

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman and seconded by Ms. LaMachia it was unanimously

Voted to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to change the staff professional development day from March 2003 to November 1, 2002.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Schlichtman noted that the Committee must vote a representative to attend the MASC delegate assembly.

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Ms. LaMachia it was unanimously

Voted Mr. Schlichtman as the official delegate of ASC at the MASC annual meeting.

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman and seconded by Mr. Sullivan it was unanimously

Voted Ms. Goodman as the alternate delegate in Mr. Schlichtman's absence.

Supt. Donovan requested that the Committee approve the hiring of Kelly Carmody at the Hardy After school Program. Mrs. Donovan explained that since Kelly is Jerry Carmody's (Hardy School principal) daughter, under Policy GBEA Staff Ethics/Conflict of Interest the School Committee must approve the hiring.

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Ms. LaMachia it was unanimously

Voted to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to hire Kelly Carmody at the Hardy After School Program.

Mr. Thrope requested that a discussion on redistricting and the associated transition plan be placed on the next agenda.

Mr. Schlichtman would like to establish a schedule for the curriculum, instruction, and assessment subcommittee to meet.

Mr. McKenna asked members to try to coordinate subcommittee meetings together as much as possible to take into consideration the schedule of the administrators and support staff who must attend. Mr. McKenna also

emphasized that he plans to start the regular meetings on time at 7:30 PM.

On a motion made and seconded it was

Voted to enter executive session for negotiations and a legal issued with no further business to be conducted except to adjourn. RC: Unanimous

Executive Session 10:40 – 11:00 PM.

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and Seconded by Ms. LaMachia it was unanimously

Voted to adjourn @11:00 PM.

**Submitted by
Karen Tassone
Committee Secretary**